State team reviewing payroll cycle

The state ConnectND implementation team is conferring with state agencies to determine the best structure for general government's pay cycle. "We've come to the conclusion that in order for PeopleSoft to work efficiently without significant modification we need a lag in the payroll cycle," Pam Sharp, state ConnectND project director said during an update over the Interactive Video Network. **(Note: This discussion does NOT concern the North Dakota University System payroll, which is processed separately from state general government. See separate article.)**

Pam Sharp

The state's current system uses an advanced payroll paid on the first working day of the month, with a supplemental payroll paid on the sixth working day. ConnectND's PeopleSoft system, with its emphasis on real-time and integrated processing, works best with a payroll lag. A payroll lag takes advantage of "best practice" available through PeopleSoft, ensuring that time, leave and overtime are all charged accurately and on a current basis.

Options under consideration include a monthly pay cycle with a lag of eight to 15 days, a semi-monthly payroll with an eight-day lag and checks issued the 8th and 24th of each month, a semi-monthly payroll with a 15-day lag and a bi-weekly payroll with a two-week lag.

State government ConnectND staff members have met with all agencies and are discussing the payroll options further with a select focus group of agency representatives. The project team will meet again with all agencies before submitting a recommendation to the state government ConnectND steering committee for a decision to be made by the end of December.

With a decision made by the end of December 2003, employees will have a six-month window to prepare for a new schedule. A transition team from state Human Resource Management Services and other state agencies will ensure employees are informed early on and clearly. The transition team will also develop plans and processes to ease employee transition toward the new schedule in July 2004.

NDUS adopted semi-monthly payroll cycle

The Higher Education Executive Steering Committee voted in September 2002 to move all of the NDUS to a semi-monthly payroll cycle with an eight-day lag period. Thus, at the Mayville State University, Valley City State University and NDUS office pilot sites, employees are now paid on the 8th for work conducted the 16th through the 31st of the previous month, and paid on the 23rd for the 1st through the 15th of the month.

Based on the pilot campus experience, both the Human Resource and Administrative councils are recommending that the Chancellor's Cabinet change it to a 15-day lag, as originally recommended by the ConnectND payroll team. The NDUS Administrative Affairs Council voted 9-2 on Dec. 2 to support a Human Resource Council recommendation favoring a 15-day lag. The issue will be discussed by the Executive Steering Committee, which will make a recommendation for consideration Dec. 17 by the Chancellor's Cabinet.

NDUS paycheck procedures approved

In conjunction with ConnectND implementation next summer, the North Dakota University System will centralize the payroll processing procedures of payroll calculation and accounts payable interface.

Centralizing these two additional payroll processes within the Higher Education Computer Network (HECN) will be more efficient with the use of PeopleSoft systems. The HECN already performs many payroll functions (e.g., general ledger interface) within the legacy system. Procedures that involve direct employee contact (e.g., paycheck printing and distribution) will continue to be decentralized and handled by the campuses to maximize customer service and accuracy.

The ConnectND Higher Education Steering Committee asked for a study of payroll processing options and approved the recommendations from the Human Resources Management Systems project team, following review by the Human Resource Council and the Administrative Affairs Council.

The issues had been discussed several years ago and the PeopleSoft implementation made the review timely. No savings in campus human resource management staff will be realized.

NDUS decides to not use time and labor module

The North Dakota University System is developing alternatives to replace the PeopleSoft time and labor software in the ConnectND project. The Higher Education Executive Steering Committee approved that recommendation from the Human Resource Management Systems and Financial Systems project teams.

The PeopleSoft time and labor module would provide additional functions but would also require significantly more effort such as entering work schedules for all employees and specific hours instead of totals for hourly employees. A revised ConnectND project plan will incorporate modifications providing some of the information that would have been generated through the time and labor software. This is the first change to the scope of ConnectND implementation.

Campus team chairs discuss specifics

Campus implementation team chairs were briefed on using the new ConnectND systems during a meeting last month hosted by Valley City State University.

Joining the meeting via telephone were NDUS project managers Teri Thorsen, Human Resources Management Systems; Mick Pytlik, Financial Systems; Jim Ross, portal; and Scott Mahar, Student Administration Systems, and others from the student project. Keith Stenehjem, Mayville State University's chief information officer, provided additional pilot site perspective.

A Status Overview spreadsheet developed by Jean Ostrom-Blonigen, NDUS statewide implementation chair, and VCSU President Ellen Chaffee outlined the systems completed at the pilot campuses, and identified processes still to implement. Some of the remaining processes were for functions occurring at the end of semesters or calendar year. Managers advised that most will be done by around January 1.

ConnectND issues and topics discussed ranged from the importance and usefulness of training manuals, having realistic expectations for the project, campus resources, long-term support, systems access, queries, testing processes and the value of preparation.

"It is more than time for the campuses to understand the project in this detail and start envisioning the project with key campus personnel," advised Chaffee. The campus team chairs are meeting monthly, usually over the Interactive Video Network.

SMEs also project liaison

Subject matter experts—also known as SMEs or "smees"—are important for more than the necessary expertise they bring to designing, configuring and testing ConnectND systems. Their involvement with ConnectND makes them invaluable in helping implement new programs and functions on campus or within an agency.

The SMEs also serve in liaison and communications roles between the project and their respective campuses and agencies. They provide accurate information to campus constituents and pass along to project managers concerns, questions, rumors, etc. from affiliated councils, organizations, campuses and agencies before they turn into problems.

And more —

e bulletin

December & January ConnectND IVN sessions

All ConnectND general and topical updates are recorded by the Interactive Video Network through Web streaming. The video archive is now on the IVN site at http://streaming.ndivn.nodak.edu/ndivn/. Click "recorded calls" to locate archived video streams.

The general updates of the overall ConnectND project are held the second Thursday of each month over IVN, at either 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. The monthly NDUS system (financial, human resources management, and student administration) sessions are held on a rotating basis. The upcoming schedule is:

- Thursday, Dec. 4 (8-8:50 p.m.) —NDUS Financial System

- Thursday, Dec. 11 (9-9:50 a.m.) —ConnectND Project Update

- Tuesday, Dec. 16 (8-8:50 a.m.) —NDUS Student System

- Thursday, Dec. 18 (8-8:50 a.m.) —NDUS Human Resources Management System

- Thursday, Jan. 8 (9-9:50 a.m.) —NDUS Financial System

- Thursday, Jan. 15 (9-9:50 a.m.) —ConnectND Project Update

- Thursday, Jan. 22 (9-9:50 a.m.) —NDUS Human Resources Management System

- Thursday, Jan. 29 (9-9:50 a.m.) —NDUS Student System

Everyone is invited to attend the IVN update sessions. Specific locations are indicated on the calendar.

During the November monthly discussion of the NDUS Human Resources Management Systems, Karen Stinar, commitment accounting module lead, used WebEx technology to guide a demonstration of how department budgets for positions are established in PeopleSoft. She is shown here with Teri Thorsen, HRMS project manager, and John Underwood, NDUS Help Desk manager

General training underway—

NDUS user information available online

Early training is now preparing some North Dakota University System students, faculty members and staff for using ConnectND systems.

The "NDUS Training and Documentation" Web site is accessible through the ConnectND home page www.nodak.edu/connectnd. Resources already available include documents and WebEx recorded tutorials for: clearing caches and cookies on the Internet Explorer browser; creating mail merges and templates and generating letters and other macros; illustrating faculty usage of class schedule, class roster and grading features; and showing how a student registers for class. The "screen shot" illustrates one of the class registration steps.

The Training and Documentation site also contains information on viewing WebEX recordings, schedules for live weekly training sessions using WebEX, links to free online PeopleSoft tutorials and the NDUS Training and Documentation Plan.

More materials and training resources will be made available as they are developed. Although information like directions for clearing browser caches and cookies is applicable to anyone, some of the training and documentation is targeted to help use PeopleSoft systems effectively for specific functions like generating letters and spread sheets.

click here to register for classes
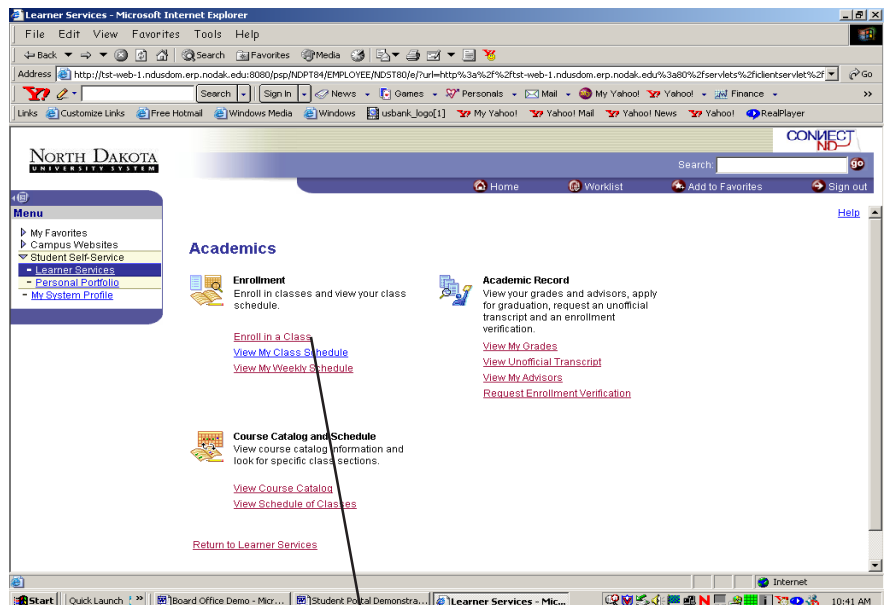
A glimpse at online registration
This is a "screen shot" similar to a WebEX recording in which Valley City State University student Jessica Benike narrates and demonstrates a simulated PeopleSoft class registration process. The complete demonstration is available through the NDUS Training and Documentation link on the ConnectND Web page. Click on "Student Administration" after advancing to that page

Words & acronyms

ERP— "Enterprise Resource Planning" System or "Enterprise Resource Package." Essentially, it means an administrative software system that covers the entire enterprise – from students to employees to financial management. While our current administrative systems (commonly known as the "legacy" systems SAMIS or CICS) were developed long before "ERP" was even thought of, they are essentially our ERP today.

Legacy System—An application in which a company or organization has previously already invested considerable time and money. Examples of legacy systems to be replaced by ConnectND are CICS (used by NDUS staff), ALFI (used by students) and SAMIS (used in state government).

WebEX—A licensed program for interactive communication over the World Wide Web and telephone. Sessions can be recorded and archived.

Web-streamed—Recorded live and broadcast real-time via the Internet to those who cannot be at the event location.

About ConnectND

What is ConnectND?

The CONNECT ND project is the implementation of *PeopleSoft's* ERP system that will replace North Dakota's current administrative computer systems. The ERP system will serve as the administrative systems for the entire enterprise – from students to employees to financial management.

Who is involved in ConnectND?

All of North Dakota State Government, including the North Dakota University System, is involved this project.

How is the ConnectND project organized?

The project has been organized by module (functional area) into three state groups (Financial, Human Resources Management System, and Technical) and four higher education groups (Financial, Human Resources Management System, Student Administration, and Technical).

Links mentioned

• **Calendar:** www.nodak.edu/connectnd index.php?module=PostCalendar

• **Connect ND:** www.nodak.edu/connectnd

• **MAXIMUS:** www.maximus.com/public/virtual/home

• **North Dakota University System:** www.ndus.nodak.edu

• **PeopleSoft:** www.peoplesoft.com/corp/en/public_index.asp

• **Rollout Schedules (these schedules will reflect changes as they occur):** www.nodak.edu/connectnd/ modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=57

• **State of North Dakota:** www.discovernd.com/

Fyi & updates

What is the current status of ConnectND?

On Dec. 5, 2003, the project oversight team returned the overall project status and project risk subcategory to "green," meaning there is strong probability that dates and acceptable quality will be met. The project was temporarily in a "yellow" cautionary status, indicating good probability ConnectND would meet dates with acceptable quality but that schedule, resources or scope changes might be needed. Cautionary status was continued for the schedule subcategory, based on a number of overdue tasks. The oversight report is available on the ConnectND Web site.

How is ConnectND being implemented?

Under the leadership of a State Executive Steering Committee (co-chaired by Lee Vickers, president, Dickinson State University and Pam Sharp, director, Office of Management and Budget) and with the help of our implementation partner, *MAXIMUS,* the project is being implemented using a four-component approach.

Components 1 and 2:
These components include the five-phases of Initiation, Design, Development, Migration, and Post-production phases at the pilot sites.

Components 3 and 4:
These components include the five-phases of Initiation, Design, Development, Migration, and Post-production phases at all the non-pilot sites.

When will ConnectND be implemented?

The *ConnectND Rollout Schedules* contain specific information related to these rollouts.

Has end-user training been scheduled?

Project managers are scheduling end-user training using a just-in-time approach, within 60 days prior to implementation. The training can only be done effectively after procedures and process to design, develop and configure the systems have been completed.

Comments and suggestions regarding this publication are welcome. We encourage questions about this newsletter or the project. To facilitate this process, you may ask a question electronically through the Web site FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section. It's also a place to view the questions others have asked and the responses of the project teams.

CONNECT ND **e bulletin**

Preparing for implementation

Things to do...

During a recent discussion over the Interactive Video Network, higher education subject matter experts from various Student Administration modules shared tips to help campus colleagues prepare for ConnectND implementation. Some of the suggestions mentioned apply to specific offices and functions and others more broadly. Here's a sampling:

- Look for the how-to-get-ready documents provided by project teams.
- Know your campus implementation team.
- Note hardware and software recommendations.
- Respond to information requests—your participation will be beneficial when your campus goes live.
- Include ConnectND on staff meeting agendas.
- Collect dates of birth, e-mail addresses and other information as required for the PeopleSoft programs.
- Prepare personally for the change to two paydays per month.
- Prepare for the stress and pressure that will accompany implementation.
- Familiarize yourself with rollout schedules when planning vacation times.
- Become familiar with PeopleSoft terminology.
- Get on appropriate e-mail lists.
- Participate in IVN updates, read the monthly eBulletin newsletter and look at the ConnectND Web site.
- Recognize the urgency of preparing campus data for configuration.
- Watch for training information.
- Recognize that some business practices and jobs will change when information is accessible from anywhere and at any time.

Recommendations for users

Based on experience at the pilot sites, the following minimums are recommended for frequent or "power" users of ConnectND PeopleSoft systems:

- **Browser**— Internet Explorer 6 for use with Windows 2000 and XP. Internet Explorer 5 or 5.5 may work on Windows 98, but some problems might be encountered. Internet Explorer 5 on Mac OS 7.6.1 or above
- **Memory**— 256 MB RAM
- **CPU**— 800 MHz
- **Display**— VGA with 800X600 resolution or higher and 16-bit colors

Casual users can access ConnectND systems with other browsers and less than those minimums but will see slower results.

MS Office (Word and Excel) will be used for various administrative functions. Recommendations concerning those software programs will be provided later.